

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 18 , 2003

Chair Mathewson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present, Commissioners: Mathewson, Parsons, Gibson, Frautschi, Dickenson, Long,

Torre (arrived 7:04)

Absent, Commissioners: None

Present, Staff: Community Development Director Ewing (CDD), Principal Planner de Melo (PP), City Attorney Savaree (CA), Recording Secretary Szabó (RS)

Chair Mathewson began the meeting by welcoming new Commissioner David Long and Commissioner William Dickenson to the Planning Commission.

C Frautschi added that he would also like to welcome Commissioner Gibson back to the Planning Commission as he had been re-appointed.

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments): None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR:

CDD Ewing requested that the two new Commissioners abstain from the consent calendar.

4A. MINUTES OF 2/18/03

MOTION: By Commissioner Gibson, second by Commissioner Frautschi, to approve the Minutes of February 18, 2003.

Ayes: Gibson, Frautschi, Parsons, Mathewson, Torre

Abstain: Long, Dickenson

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

5A. PUBLIC HEARING – 2920 San Juan Boulevard

To consider a Variance, Single Family Design Review, and Tree Removal Permit to construct a new 432 square foot, detached two-car garage within the front setback for the site. The proposed addition would result in a total floor area for the residence of 2,981 square feet that is in compliance with the R-1B zoning district floor area requirements.

PP de Melo presented the staff report, recommending approval of the project by the Commission, subject to the conditions of approval contained in the draft resolution.

The Applicant, Dan Biermann, spoke before the Commission briefly summarizing the project.

C Long asked the applicant to describe how the floor of the garage would vary from the height of the cobblestone drive, so that he (C Long) might better understand the amount of grading that will take place.

The applicant explained that the pad elevation would be approximately at the base of the existing first low wall.

MOTION: By C Parsons to close the Public Hearing, second by C Torre. Motion passed.

C Gibson noted that there would be several large Oleanders that would screen the proposed garage from public view. He added that he would like to know if a condition of approval could be added that would require the installation of a sidewalk in front of the property, should the Oleanders ever be removed.

PP de Melo said that it would be very difficult to implement, as this is in the public right-of-way.

C Torre stated that she didn't feel the lack of a garage presented an "unnecessary physical hardship".

C Parsons noted that he did not feel this project would be precedent setting if it were to be approved. He stated further that he felt this proposal was the only way this garage could be built without disturbing the creek.

C Long agreed with C Parsons that this was the only acceptable way to add a garage to the property. He also added that he felt the majority of residents passing by this dwelling, would rather see a well-built structure, than the back of two cars.

C Dickenson also stated he felt that a covered garage would be an asset to the neighborhood, and keeping in mind that the one tree that would be removed would be replaced with three trees, made the project acceptable to him.

C Frautschi reiterated that the applicants have productive use of their property and there is no hardship. He continued to say that this would be a grant of special privilege.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, second by Commissioner Gibson, approving the Variance for a Single Family Design Review and Tree Removal Permit at 2920 San Juan Boulevard.

Ayes: Parsons, Gibson, Long, Dickenson

Noes: Frautschi, Torre, Mathewson

Motion passed 4/3

Chair Mathewson noted that the item may be appealed to the City Council within ten days.

5B. PUBLIC HEARING – F Street @ El Camino Real

To consider a Conditional Use Permit, Design Review, Grading Plan, and Variance to construct a new 25-unit apartment building for the Mental Health Association of San Mateo County. The three-story, 13,796 square foot building includes 26 on-site parking spaces and landscaping improvements for the site.

PP de Melo began his presentation with a few minor corrections to the staff report. Staff recommended approval of the project with conditions of approval consisting of the Applicant entering into a legal binding agreement with the City Attorney, which covenants these units to maintain affordability to the very low-income population segment.

Chair Mathewson asked staff what length of time is attached to maintaining agreement for the very low-income population.

PP de Melo answered that the potential length of time these agreements would be in effect would be between 45 to 55 years.

CDD Ewing interjected that a 45-year term for the agreement is the typical term for redevelopment projects, but the City would probably just require this agreement to be in effect for the life of the project.

C Gibson asked staff what was the trigger that made a traffic study necessary for this project.

PP de Melo responded by answering that although most residents will not have cars, staff has made it a practice that for any commercial development in the City, a traffic study is required to insure that parking issues have been adequately addressed since parking is such a big issue in this City.

Katie Crecelius, Development Consultant for the Applicant, addressed the Commission stating that she was very pleased to be before the Commission to propose this Development that she felt served an important need in our Community. She added that the residents that would be residing in this Facility would not require 24-hour supervision.

Maritza del Gadillo, introducing herself as one of the Principals at Kodama Diseno Architects, described the Buildings features, including roofing materials to the Commission.

C Long asked if the height of the roof is above the CalTrain tracks, would one be able to see the top of the roofline from El Camino.

The Applicant replied that the roofline would not be in view.

C Gibson inquired about the status of funding for the project.

The Applicant responded by stating that 7 of the 9 funding sources are committed at this time.

C Torre wished to know if there would be any objections to the Conditional Use Permit being limited to Housing for the Mentally Ill.

The Applicant stated that although it is the intent of the Mental Health Association to operate this building permanently, she did not believe there would be any objections to other uses.

Michelle Jackson of Shelter Network, Christopher Mohr of The Housing Leadership Council, Wendy Goldberg of the San Mateo County Office of Housing, Carol Kittermaster, Board Member of Sustainable San Mateo County and Board member of the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, Darin Lounds of The Corporation of Supportive Housing, and Laura Peterhans of Peninsula Interfaith Action all voiced their resounding support for the F Street Project.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, second by Commissioner Torre, to close the public hearing. Motion passed.

C Long stated that he thought this was a very noble purpose and could not find any reason to oppose the project. He also added that he thought it was noteworthy that there were no opponents to a project of this size.

C Parsons said that he liked the project and made some suggestions regarding vegetation that could be used around the building.

C Dickenson also agreed that it was a great project. He felt there was incredible representation for the project from the residents who spoke this evening.

C Torre voiced her approval of the color composition of the building and added that she was comfortable with the parking situation. She said that she would like to see a condition attached to the approval that enforced single occupancy in the studio units of the building.

Chair Mathewson also stated that he was in favor of this project, but felt that it should be noted that staff should come back to the Commission with some form of amendment to the parking ordinance to deal with situations like this.

MOTION: By Commissioner Torre, second by Commissioner Parsons, resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Belmont approving a Conditional Use Permit, Design Review, Variance and Grading Plan for the Mental Health Association of San Mateo County residential project at F Street El Camino Real, with the conditions attached, and with 3 additional items as follows; Occupancy will be for low income individuals, Applicant shall come back before the Commission with a final Landscape Plan and Signage Plan.

Ayes: Torre, Parsons, Frautschi, Long, Gibson, Dickenson, Mathewson

Noes: None

Motion Passed 7/0

5C. PUBLIC HEARING – 1070 Sixth Avenue

To consider a Conditional Use Permit, Design Review, and Tree Removal Permit for the Belmont Police Facility/City Hall Remodel Project. The project includes an 8,003 square foot addition to the existing three-story 43,599 square foot City Hall building, seismic reinforcement, a new second floor City Council chamber, and relocation of police services into the remodeled building. A 6,000 square foot auxiliary building to the west of City Hall currently housing police services would be demolished as part of the project. The project also includes parking lot modifications and landscaping improvements for the site.

PP de Melo reviewed the staff report for the Commission recommending approval of the project.

Dan Rich, Assistant City Manager, speaking on behalf of the City of Belmont, presented the Police Department, City Hall Project to the Commission.

C Long asked the Applicant if there has been any discussion regarding over-flow parking when the City is hosting a public event of some kind.

Keith Anderson with Harris and Associates, currently representing the City of Belmont as Project Manager, responded to C Long's question. He stated that the issue of parking for special events within the City was not approached, but rather the issue of providing sufficient parking for daily business use of the Facility was the major focus for the Architects, and they have provided spaces well over the required parking for that function.

Dan Rich added that the Commission should keep in mind that they are reviewing the City of Belmont, Police Department and City Hall Project, and C Long's question refers to needs that would be mandated by other uses, not the use of this building.

C Long inquired about the security for the City's Police vehicles, noting that most cities in the Peninsula have secured parking behind fences and gates for their Patrol cars.

Police Captain, Don Mattei responded by stating that the issue is not only security of the Police cars, but also the movement of prisoners in and out of the vehicles.

C Gibson asked the Architects to explain how they dealt with the thermal load of the window wall, which faces the sun.

Ashraf Fouad, AIA, with Kaplan, McLaughlin, and Diaz, responded by saying that a low "E-glass", which has a low emission as well as a double glaze would provide good insulation from the sun.

Alec Little, residing at 1048 O'Neill Avenue addressed the Commission by stating that he had no objections to the proposed project, but was concerned about the type of fencing that would be used on the property. He asked that a more visually pleasing material be used for the fencing, then what is proposed at this time. He stated further that he would hope that the illumination of the property would not increase greatly with the new Facility. He also asked that landscaping be considered that would minimize the visual impact for those residents in the vicinity of the project.

MOTION: By Commissioner Frautschi, second by Commissioner Parsons to close the Public

Hearing. Motion Passed.

C Parsons stated that he liked the new proposal, but asked that a more detailed landscape plan and fencing plan be brought back before the Commission at a later date.

C Frautschi noted that a lot of deciduous plants were being used in the landscape plan. He stated that he would like to see some other types of vegetation incorporated in the plan. He also added that he felt the chain-link fencing did not have a consistent flow that fit with the design of the building.

C Dickenson agreed that there should be more continuity regarding the fencing. He added that the lighting issue should be taken into consideration for those residents that will be closest to the new Facility.

C Long stated that he felt the project was esthetically appealing. He reiterated that he wanted to see the Police Department upgraded as soon as possible. He also voiced his concern regarding the number of parking spaces proposed, and suggested that staff continue studying this issue for possible solutions.

C Torre also expressed her support for the project, and added that she would also like to see landscape and fencing plans come back to the Commission for review.

Chair Mathewson stated that he wanted to ensure the lobby of the new City Hall has the best acoustical treatment possible, as it has the potential to be cavernous. He added that he too, was concerned about the parking situation and suggested that the Applicant might want to consider providing shuttle service on the days it is anticipated the parking lot will be overly taxed. He continued by stating that although this is not a residential project, an esthetic treatment should still be given to the backflow preventer equipment. Chair Mathewson also agreed that the landscaping and fencing plan should come back to the Commission for review at a later date.

MOTION by Commissioner Parsons Second by Commissioner Torre Adapting a Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance for the Belmont Police Facility/Belmont City Hall Project at 1070 Sixth Avenue.

AYES: Parsons, Torre, Frautschi, Long, Gibson, Dickenson, Mathewson

NOES: None

Motion Passed 7/0

Motion by Commissioner Parsons, Second by Chair Mathewson Approving a Conditional Use Permit, Design Review, and Tree Removal Permit for the Belmont Police Facility/City Hall Project 1070 Sixth Avenue including the condition that the Landscape and Fencing Plans will come back to the Commission for review at a later date, and inclusive of the changes made by the Chair.

AYES: Parsons, Mathewson, Frautschi, Long, Gibson, Torre, Dickenson

NOES: None

Motion Passed 7/0

6. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

7. REPORTS, STUDIES, UPDATES, AND COMMENTS

CDD Ewing asked those Commissioners that have not yet turned in their, "700 Economic Disclosure Statement" to the City Clerk, they should do so by no later than April 1st, 2003.

8. PLANNING COMMISSION LIAISON TO CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY,

March 25, 2003.

Liaison: Commissioner Frautschi

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Mathewson

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m. to a regular meeting on April 1, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP

Planning Commission Secretary

Audiotapes of Planning Commission Meetings are available for review

in the Community Development Department

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.